

Confessions - of a Character Reader

Near Washington Square is a little restaurant, two steps down from the street level, where the proprietor does the cooking and his wife, son and daughter the serving, and none may pass the entrance door save those introduced by one already known there.

Dining in this queer, clean place were a few friends, including a character reader, the blended hum of French and Italian was like an obscuring portiere separating them from the other guests, insuring the privacy which inspires conversational confidences.

There were in the party a writer, the character reader, a playwright and his sister, and a civil engineer. As the dinner here is served in single dishes courses with digestive waits between, there was abundant opportunity for recitals.

"I should fancy that a character reader, especially now that things of that sort are fast, would encounter some queer things," said the civil engineer with the rising inflection which made the assertion a question.

"By jove! what an opportunity for studying the human animal at close range and divested of all misleading assumption you have, Pete. I never thought of it before. Tell us about it," said the writer of plays, on the lookout for any situation.

The writer, slowly sipping his claret, said nothing, and the character reader, who was young and possessed an unseared conscience, said that he would use no names, and proceeded to relate an experience.

It was, he said, while he was still at college that a phrenologist assured him he could become successful as a reader of character. A few months after this he was at dinner in a small inland city where he was spending his vacation, when it suddenly occurred to him to try his powers.

Turning to a woman sitting at his left, he said:

"What a keen sense of humor you have, and yet almost no one suspects it! You are, in a way, shy and late explaining. There are few who see things as you do. Therefore, if you confided what you observed, explanations would be almost invariably necessary. To avoid this, you lead a double life, one which those about you know and another which is wholly within yourself."

"How in the world did you know that?" the young woman exclaimed.

"This called attention to me," the character reader went on. "Encouraged by my success, I told others what they knew about themselves, to their great wonder and delight."

"An account of what I did at this dinner was published. The next day after the story appeared I received a letter asking me to come and read the character of the writer. On inquiry, I found that he was a candidate for alderman and was told he had not the ghost of a chance of election."

"I wanted experience and to experiment, and without fear and trembling, you know the sort who go farly forward where angels fear to tread—I went to this man's house to give my first professional character reading."

"The man asked that I read first for his wife. They were shrewd, uneducated people, who did not in the least realize themselves."

"I have always insisted on being alone with the person for whom I read. As I proceeded with the delineation of the woman's character, she became greatly excited and, rushing out into the hallway, called out to her husband, who was in an adjoining room."

"My Gawd, John, it's just wonderful!"

"At last, not waiting for me to finish, she left me, exclaiming as she went, 'Oh, John, but it's wonderful. He's been telling me more about myself than I ever knew, and you're good to be elected. He read it in me char-ack-ter!'"

"The man impressed me as a person who could do things, but I saw he lacked initiative, tact and the knowledge which experience gives, and was anxious and afraid. When I asked him if he had before consulted a character reader, he said he had not, as he was afraid of my kind of folks."

"As I was experimenting, I made up my mind to see if I could not put him in the way of getting into office by reading and telling him things which caused him to exclaim to his wife, quite as she had done to him."

"You can be elected easy enough, but it is up to you to do the things that people like and that will make them like you. Now, the men who vote you are not as a rule, give a bang what you promise to do if you are elected, nor for you, your wife and children, but they care for themselves and what concerns them personally."

"What you want to do is to bustle out and talk with every man, woman and child you can get at. Talk with them about their affairs and let them talk to you about themselves. There is nothing pleases folks like that."

"Make them feel they are as fine as silk, and that you know it. If you do this they'll go up to you for you, and you'll go in with a good big majority as a tall to your kite."

"Don't be afraid, though! I don't do not as a rule, give a bang what you promise to do if you are elected, nor for you, your wife and children, but they care for themselves and what concerns them personally."

"The man was thoroughly convinced I was a wonder, and I was certain he would act on my advice. He asked where I would be after election, and he and his wife followed me even to the street with profuse thanks."

"Then, and many times afterward, I found myself questioning what the outcome of the election would be for my man. The next day after it occurred I knew, for I received this wire:

"You are a truth teller. I am elected."

"A few days later, to my utter amazement, I received a beautiful set of Shakespeare. Think of it, a set of Shakespeare from that man!"

"A character reader as a politician's manager—that could certainly be new," said the playwright, thoughtfully.

"How interesting!" said his sister. "Do tell us of other of your experiences."

The character reader, who had been so successful with these people gave me assurance and I went on reading character with something like a gambler's fascinated interest, to see what could do and assure you, no one I read for could have been more surprised at what I said to them than I was myself."

"At a restaurant where three of my fellow students and myself did our feeding there was a pretty little waitress whom we took turns in feeding. We were talking one day at dinner of how fond all kinds of people are of being revealed to themselves, when one of my chums proposed that we should ask our little waitress what she would prefer, her weekly *pour boire* or to have her character read."

"Involuntarily and with enthusiasm, she said she would have her character read. I'll venture to say that the most popular of father confessors does not receive as many or as varied confidences as does a character reader, and the little waitress,

being no exception to the general rule, told me about her love affair."

"She said her sweetheart was a plumber who earned good money, but that most of it went for drink. As he did not listen to her, she asked if I could do something to induce him to change his course."

"I asked: 'Is he superstitious?' and she answered: 'No, but he is a little bit of a religionist or not.'"

"When I asked if she were really fond of him she said she liked him well when he was sober, adding, as a chief reason for her preference, that he could earn in one day as much as she did in a week."

"Being assured that he was of the sort that demanded to have the elephant painted I proceeded accordingly. It happened that two friends were with me the evening I had arranged to see the plumber. When he was announced I hustled them into a closet and slipping into a white bath robe, wrapped in fashion in yellow silk, I said about my head and lighted an incense stick."

"I had astonished the young fellow by telling of things he supposed no one could possibly know save himself. I tackled the drink question. The picture I drew of her husband, adding, as he crossed, would have done credit to the most fiery eloquence of a Father Mathew's society orator."

"He grew white as I proceeded. When I reached a climax I told him he must sign a pledge which I had ready. I had red ink and a quill little *cloisonné* pot and had him sign it."

"You must sign this pledge in blood—sacred blood in which is the life of men and women. If you break a pledge so signed you will be damned here and forever after."

"While the reading had been going forward there were occasional snatches of which I recognized as suppressed laughter in the closet where my friends were waiting, but to him they seemed not of the world, and he was so concerned he converted for the last I knew of him and the little waitress were happily married, and he had not broken his pledge since."

"I shall not soon forget," the character reader continued, "my first visit to Newport. It happened that not long after I became a professional reader for a woman who had recently acquired riches and a place there. She had invited a party of friends and included me among them."

"Greatly impressed by what I had told her of herself, she seemed to think that anything God knows I could find out. Shortly after I arrived she sent for me to come to her boudoir and handing me a little black book bound in fine morocco said: 'I shall not soon forget,' the character reader continued, 'my first visit to Newport. It happened that not long after I became a professional reader for a woman who had recently acquired riches and a place there. She had invited a party of friends and included me among them.'

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AMERICAN HARPS THE BEST.

These Made in Europe Unable to Stand the Climate Here.

It was certainly a sick looking harp. The carved pillar had buckled out of shape, there were cracks along its body and the sounding board had warped in unsightly welts.

Its beautiful carving, inlaid tracery and gilding showed that it once had been a musical instrument of great price. But now its soul was gone.

"A recent arrival from Europe," said the music dealer as the expression set it down in the corner. "European harps are like European furniture in our climate; they must be rebuilt."

"This instrument isn't so hopeless a wreck as you might think. We'll send it out to Chicago, where there is a big harp factory, and they'll put steel ribs into its body, strengthen the veneers, straighten out the column, restore the inlaid work, and so forth. When it comes back in all its original beauty, we'll sell it at a profit for the world, for it will be to all intents and purposes an American instrument."

"Yes, we import our violinists, pianists and opera singers, but we make our own harps, and the famous European soloists and orchestras buy them from us. What have we Americans to lose in this advantage? Well, partly our climate."

"We had to build them to last here, which means an instrument that will last anywhere. American builders know how to make better veneers, evidently. Then they've found a way of fastening the pillar to the body which prevents breaking, so common in foreign instruments."

"The body is reinforced inside with ribs, all the pedal rods are placed in tubes that muffle their rattle, and the body is built to stand the enormous pull of the strings. American harps, too, have better tone. It may surprise you to know that the latest improvement in a European harp dates back to 1875."

"There is a decided revival of interest in the harp just now, and it seems to be a musical instrument that has come to stay. A few years ago the church choir that had a harpist was a novelty. Now many churches have them, and most of the players are young men."

"The harp offers an attractive career to a woman of moderate musical ability. Long years of practice on the piano or violin would bring her nowhere, but two years' study of the harp enables an intelligent player to appear in a choir or dance orchestra. The harp is also popular at weddings."

"The record time for learning this instrument is held by a man harpist in this city, who played a quartet a year after the time he began to practice. You see, the harp is a simple instrument, requiring no great flexibility of hands, as does the piano. Some of the crack pianists can reach three notes more than the octave, which is a spread of over seven inches. On the harp such a player could reach more than two octaves."

"Harp music is written much the same as piano music, but is simpler. The instrument lends itself to simple music, too, so that a little proficiency goes a great way. Many women are amateur harpists of skill and harps are now purchased for children."

"You'd be surprised to know how much in vogue they are and how many are sold in New York. Two-thirds of the purchasers are women, and perhaps of these one-half buy the instrument as a means to a livelihood. Besides recitals, church playing, readings, etc., there is a demand for harp teachers."

"Only one thing stands in the way of this instrument's wider popularity. That's the price. A good harp costs twice as much as the best concert grand piano. But if you elaborate ornamentation they may run as high as \$3,500."

"But when a first cost has been met, the instrument becomes a good investment. I don't know how long a European harp would last—that instrument in the corner of my office is an American harp, and it is said that the construction of an American harp is so scientific and strong that a full century may be set as its shortest life."

Hired Indian Mourners.

Strange Customs and Superstitions of the Red Men of Oklahoma.

Hardly any of the Indian mythologies have been so completely and primitively preserved as those of the Red Men of Oklahoma. They have many assistant gods; the snow god, the rain god, the tornado gods and a host of bigger and lesser gods," said Matt Dahr to the Oklahoma correspondent of the Kansas City Journal. "Some of our Oklahoma Americans firmly believe that some of their noted ancestors dwelt in certain stars, and when they see a so-called shooting star, they believe it is the spirit of an ancestor who has descended from above to visit his relatives on earth."

"Some of the ignoble red men mourn with vigor for their dead and have them entombed in 450 shroud coffins. Some have mourners to sing, chant or grunt the great words of their deceased. The hired mourners have to abstain from eating during the mourning. They are tied securely on their backs so that when sleeping they cannot fall from the horses. Some of these paid mourners for the dead refrain from eating for four days and nights."

"The last noted mourner was hired to mourn four days and nights on the banks of the salty Cimarron. He was paid four dollars a day, and he was to keep his relatives from eating or drinking anything during the mourning. He was to keep his relatives from eating or drinking anything during the mourning. He was to keep his relatives from eating or drinking anything during the mourning."

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HERE IS FATHER GAPON'S PICTURE

Photograph of the Russian Workingmen's Leader Taken in Front of Plymouth Rock in 1901.

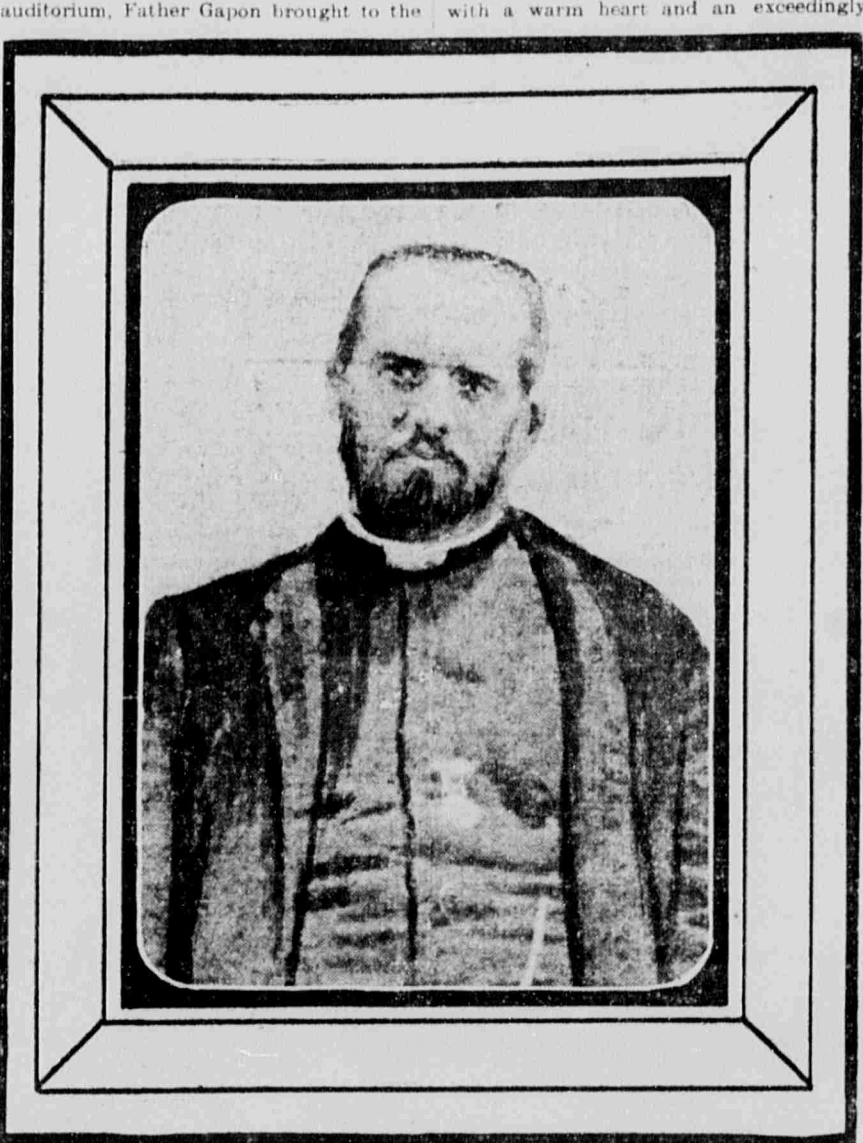
Here is the portrait of Father Gapon, the leader of the striking workingmen at St. Petersburg. It is taken from a photograph of a group of foreign delegates to the international jubilee convention of the Young Men's Christian Association, held in Boston in June, 1901. The photograph was taken in front of Plymouth Rock.

Father Gapon was one of the most striking personages present at the convention. The meetings of the convention were held in Mechanics' Hall, and the thousands who were present on the evening when the foreign delegates were introduced will remember how, in almost flawless English and with a clear, ringing voice that could be heard to the remotest corner of the vast auditorium, Father Gapon brought to the

with the hearty approval of the Czar and the leading officials of the empire. Father Gapon, recognizing in the Young Men's Christian Association an institution that might be of immense help in bettering the condition of the great mass of Russian young men, threw himself with all the earnestness and zeal of his nature into the work.

One who had the privilege of meeting him personally and talking with him on several occasions described him as being a man of splendid physique, not less than 6 feet tall. In spite of his 200 pounds he seemed as agile as an athlete.

He possessed a most attractive personality and impressed one as being a man with a warm heart and an exceedingly



Young Men's Christian Associations of America the greetings of the Czar of Russia.

Father Gapon impressed all with whom he came into contact as being a man of deep personal piety and intensely interested in everything that pertained to the welfare of young men. He gave special attention to the exhibit of the evening educational classes of the Young Men's Christian Association, and during the recesses of the convention could frequently be seen going from one group of exhibits to another, taking notes and asking questions.

As the result of a visit to Russia by Clarence Hicks, chief secretary of the railway branch of the American Young Men's Christian Associations, this department of the organization was being introduced at the present division points of the great Russian railway system. The movement had been undertaken at the request and

sympathetic nature. One had to speak Russian in order to feel that he was a man whose whole life was dominated by one great, unalterable purpose, and that that purpose was to do, by every means in his power, all that he could to place within the reach of his fellow countrymen, especially those of the great peasant class, all the benefits and blessings that are the common heritage of those who live under a free Government.

On the day after the convention adjourned the delegates were taken on an excursion to Plymouth. Standing in front of Plymouth Rock with the group of other foreign delegates about him, and having learned the historic incidents connected with the spot, Father Gapon was evidently so impressed with the traditions associated with the scene that he was about to lift his hat, in which act he was immediately followed by all present.

ARCHBISHOP'S RELIGIOUS DOG

Philadelphia Students Have Educated Mr. Ryan's Collie and He's Very Wise.

The famous St. Bernard dog trained to a show of religious practices by a Benedictine monk has a rival in a collie owned by Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia. The collie struck up an acquaintance with the Archbishop one day while he was taking his customary walk in Fairmount Park, and thereafter stuck close to the heels of the prelate, even to the doors of the episcopal residence.

"Begone!" commanded the Archbishop, who was afraid that some one might think he was trying to smuggle the handsome animal into the house. The dog went sheepishly down the steps, but, catching his customary walk in Fairmount Park, and thereafter stuck close to the heels of the prelate, even to the doors of the episcopal residence.

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